

THE *Dan Smoot Report*



DAN SMOOT

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NEA'S MALIGN INFLUENCE

Traditional American education stressed discipline, hard work, honor, duty, and self-reliance with Divine guidance. It was not easy. But it developed great men and women — sturdy individualists who (without federal aid or foreign aid) transformed the backward and underdeveloped American wilderness into the most fruitful nation in history.

But while hardy individualists, products of traditional American education, were building the nation, thoughtstreams of the nation were being polluted in prosperous and settled regions, by some intellectuals who were ill at ease in the vigorous, daring life of America — and who, therefore, readily responded to the tired, cynical, and sickly socialist philosophy imported from Europe. John Dewey was one of these.

John Deweyism scorns individualism, holding that the proper aim of the biological organism called *man* is to lose its individuality by finding acceptance and absorption in the mass. The “progressive education” Dewey recommended is intended to make men and women faceless factors in a controlled, levelled-down mass of humanity.⁽¹⁾

From 1904 to 1930, John Dewey was head of Teachers College at Columbia University, where his ideas have molded the thinking of leading American “educationists.”

An essential strategy of the John Dewey educationists was the removal of parental influence in the operation of public schools. Parents were to be relegated to the role of supplying children and tax money, and of supporting whatever the professional educationists prescribed. School boards (by pressure and influence exerted in many ways) were to be induced to rubberstamp the “new,” “progressive,” “experimental” ideas of the professional educationists.

Dr. Harold O. Rugg was a leading Dewey disciple. In 1933, Rugg wrote *The Great Technology*. In this book, Rugg argued that America must be converted into a socialist dictatorship. He

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did not, of course, put it that bluntly. He said we must have a new government with all-pervading powers to plan and regulate the lives of the people and the economy of the nation.⁽²⁾

Rugg (whose work was partly financed by the Rockefeller Foundation) said teachers had the important job of conditioning "a new public mind" for the "new social order."⁽²⁾

Six Rugg textbooks, called the *Building America* series, were sponsored by the National Education Association. By 1940, more than 5,000,000 *Building America* books were in use in American public schools. The State of California finally banned them, a California legislative committee reporting:

"[The *Building America* books do] not present a true historical background of American history and progress . . . the cartoons and pictures appearing in said books belittle American statesmen, who have been . . . heroes of American tradition and . . . idealized by the American people; yet . . . the *Building America* series glamorizes Russian statesmen and [is] replete with pictures which do great credit to these leaders of Russian thought. . . . [The] books contain purposely distorted references favoring Communism, and life in Soviet Russia. . . ."⁽³⁾

Dr. George S. Counts (another John Dewey disciple) and the Commission on Social Studies of the American Historical Association were alike dedicated to abolishing traditional education by changing curricula, textbooks, and teaching techniques. The Commission (financed by a \$340,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation) recommended that courses in history, economics, civics, and geography be combined into one course called "social studies," with emphasis on "social" or "conflict of masses" ideas. The Commission said:

"Cumulative evidence supports the conclusion that, in the United States as in other countries, the age of individualism and laissez faire in economy and government is closing and that a new age of collectivism is emerging. . . .

"This 'collectivism'. . . . almost certainly . . .

will involve . . . enlargement of the functions of government, and an increasing state intervention in fundamental branches of economy previously left to the individual discretion and initiative."⁽³⁾

British socialist leader Harold J. Laski said of the Commission's report:

"At bottom, and stripped of its carefully neutral phrases, the report is an educational program for a Socialist America."⁽³⁾

By the mid-1940's, John Dewey educationists had driven far toward their goal of eliminating academic discipline and basic learning from public schools — of developing a nationally-controlled school system whose primary purpose is to prepare school children for government-provided cradle-to-the-grave security in a new socialist order.

The two non-governmental organizations which have had the most influence in this corrupting of public education are the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA).

The American Federation of Teachers was organized in 1916. From the beginning, it has been a militant, marxist organization, using force, politics, pressure, and propaganda to gain control over teachers and thus build power for itself.

The AFT never did achieve a large national membership. Its strength has always been concentrated in a few eastern cities — mainly, New York City. But the AFT influence on public education in the U. S. has been enormous for two principle reasons: (1) during the critical period of the 1930's, such people as John Dewey, George Counts, and Norman Thomas were members of the AFT; (2) rivalry between the AFT and the NEA has encouraged an ever-leftward movement of the NEA.

The National Education Association was organized in 1862. In 1906, Congress conferred upon it a federal charter, with headquarters in the District of Columbia, to work as a professional organization in the field of education.

For a time, the NEA did operate as a professional group, publishing information helpful to classroom teachers, trying to improve the quality of teachers and teaching in the public schools. But by the mid-1930's, the NEA — like its rival, the AFT — was militant and marxist. The NEA became the foremost leader of the drive that was begun by John Dewey educationists in the American Federation of Teachers — the drive to create "an educational program for a socialist America,"⁽³⁾ which would be governed by an elite of professional educator-politicians.⁽⁴⁾

Remember, it was the NEA that was largely responsible for getting more than 5,000,000 copies of *Building America* books used in public schools — books which were eventually banned in California as pro-communist, subversive of American ideals.⁽³⁾

The NEA sponsored *The American Way of Business* for use by teachers as source material. This publication was financed by the Rockefeller General Education Board, and was written by Oskar Lange and Abba P. Lerner. Lange was a professor at the University of Chicago, before renouncing his U. S. citizenship to become an official of the communist government of Poland. *The American Way of Business* recommended:

- that all banks, credit institutions, and insurance companies be nationalized (that is, confiscated by the federal government and operated under public ownership);

- that all basic natural resources (mines, oil fields, timber, coal, and so on) be nationalized;

- that special courts "might" be created to oversee all economic activities, and given enough power to overrule laws of Congress, of state legislatures, of local governments.⁽³⁾

The National Education Association has sponsored and recommended many sociology textbooks which have poisoned the minds of high school and college students throughout the land. In 1951, Dr. A. H. Hobbs of the University of Pennsylvania reviewed more than 100 sociology textbooks being used in American high schools and colleges. He found that 95% of these books (many of them recommended by the NEA) were slanted

to favor a collectivist (*i.e.*, socialist) economy in preference to America's traditional free enterprise economy.⁽³⁾

By the 1960's, the NEA had a stranglehold on public education in the United States. Note these excerpts from an editorial published in October, 1962, by the *Chicago Sun-Times*:

"That the National Education Association . . . advocates Federal aid has surprised us at times. But no longer. For control — real control over the Nation's children — is being shifted rapidly to the NEA. That organization has about completed the job of cartelizing public school education under its own cartel.

"It is doing so under an organization known as the National Council for Accreditation of Teachers Education, an agency whose governing council is tightly NEA controlled. . . . The manner in which the NEA is usurping parental prerogatives by determining the type of education offered . . . is . . . very simple: control the education and hiring of teachers.

"This is what the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE . . .) has set out to do and what, to a considerable extent, it has accomplished. Most public school administrators belong to NEA. Increasingly, public school administrators hire only teachers who have received their training in NCATE-approved institutions. . . .

"Many fine colleges throughout the Nation . . . have to knuckle under, otherwise their students who wish to be teachers would have difficulty getting jobs, the NEA cartel being what it is. So the NEA is now dictating to colleges what they will teach. . . . "

Presidents of the United States have selected so many NEA officials for key positions in the U. S. Office of Education that the NEA practically runs that federal agency, which dispenses billions of tax dollars.⁽⁴⁾ NEA influence on Congress and on the Supreme Court is also powerful and baneful. The NEA works constantly with monopolistic unions, huge tax-exempt founda-

tions, racial-agitation organizations, the National Council of Churches, and similar groups, lobbying for court decisions and big-spending federal programs that are destroying our constitutional system and converting the federal government into a socialist dictatorship.

For years, the NEA pretended that it was not a union, and claimed to be opposed to teacher strikes. In 1967, its old rival, the American Federation of Teachers, called an illegal teacher strike in New York City. The strike was a "success." The union got what it wanted. No one was prosecuted for violating the law, and AFT "prestige" among militant teachers soared.

By February, 1968, the NEA president was boasting that the NEA and its affiliates were participating in more teacher strikes and walkouts than the AFT was.⁽⁵⁾

In 1969, an NEA-written bill which would legalize teacher strikes was introduced in the U. S. Senate.⁽⁶⁾ Passage of this bill is currently an NEA prime objective. Called the Professional Negotiation Act for Public Education, it was introduced as S 1951 on April 25, 1969, by Senator Lee Metcalf. It would give the NEA and its affiliates a practical monopoly to represent teachers in collective bargaining with school boards, on all matters pertaining to public schools. It would set up in the Department of HEW (where NEA has powerful influence) a special commission to mediate disputes, and it would legalize teacher strikes if mediation fails.⁽⁶⁾ The NEA is lobbying for similar "professional negotiation" laws in all 50 states.⁽⁷⁾

The NEA collects more than \$25 million a year in membership dues — mostly from public school teachers. The teachers could cripple the NEA by refusing to join and pay dues, but few will dare do that as long as the NEA is virtually all-powerful in public education. NEA power could be so reduced that teachers would no longer fear it, if the federal government would revoke the tax exemptions of the NEA — and of the AFT as well. Both organizations, by their political

lobbying, have violated the tax code which gives them exemption.

If the NEA had to pay taxes on its huge annual income, and if tax-exemption were not allowed on gifts to the NEA, the NEA's malign influence on public schools, and on public policy generally, would soon vanish.

But even more than that is needed. The condition of our country clearly indicates that our civilization will not survive unless we return to traditional American education which stressed discipline, hard work, honor, duty, and self-reliance with Divine guidance. This can never be done through a public school system which has been ruined by federal courts, federal bureaucrats, teachers unions, and the NEA.

The only sensible solution is to abolish compulsory tax-supported schools. With the money thus saved, the people can build their own competitive, private schools.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) "John Dewey's Theories of Education," by William F. Warde, *International Socialist Review*, Winter 1960 issue
- (2) *What's Happened to Our Schools*, by Rosalie M. Gordon, America's Future, 1956
- (3) *Foundations: Their Power and Influence*, by Rene A. Wormser, Devin-Adair Co., 1958
- (4) "National Education Association Versus the School Boards," speeches in the House by U. S. Congressman John M. Ashbrook, June 25, 26, 1963
- (5) *U. S. News & World Report*, Feb. 19, 1968, p. 84
- (6) *National Education Association Press Release*, May 23, 1969; *NEA Reporter*, May 23, 1969; *Congressional Record*, April 25, 1969, pp. S4121-26
- (7) AP, July 7, 1970

NOTICE: The first *Dan Smoot Report* was published June 29, 1955. A one-year subscription cost \$10.00 then. Over the years, with countless postal raises, rising labor costs, rising paper costs, and inflation of 34%, the one-year subscription price remained \$10.00.

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